

Statement of the Republic of The Gambia by

Mr. Harry SAMBOU,

Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence,
during the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of
States Parties

Mr. Chairperson

Please allow me to warmly congratulate you at the outset for your election as Chairperson of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of States Parties, and to reassure you of the full support and cooperation of my Delegation. Let me also register my Delegation's appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, His Excellency Amb. Paul ARKWRIGHT of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Chairperson

The Gambia associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, by H.E. Mr. AKHONDZADEH, Deputy Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the Statement on behalf of the African Group as presented by the distinguished Ambassador of Sudan, H.E. Mr. Sirajuddin YUSUF.

Congratulations are also extend to the Technical Secretariat for its commendable performance, under the leadership of its Director General, H.E. Ambassador UZUMCU, as manifested in the recently concluded Supplementary Arrangement for implementation of the Relationship Agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations Organisation.

On the global front, we commend the success stories relating to the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the near-universality of its membership, and the destruction of 75 percent of the world's declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, in spite of the missed deadline of 29 April 2012 for the complete destruction of all declared chemical weapon stockpiles of States Parties.

The Gambia also lauds the continued support for the special Program for Africa, and in particular would like to register its profound appreciation for all the countries that render political, financial and technical support for this important program.

Through this, as well as other related programs managed by the Technical Secretariat, The Gambia has been able to hold a Sensitization Workshop for the National Authority of my country through a Technical Assistance Visit By the OPCW last Year, Domesticated the Convention by promulgating "the Chemical Weapons Prohibition Bill 2012" in April this Year and are about to Sign the Immunities and Privileges Agreement any time now, through our Permanent Representative, here.

Mr. Chairperson, while there is much evidence of success with regards to the implementation of the Convention, a number of issues need to be addressed if the stated objective "to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons" is to be achieved. These include:

- Universality: Every effort must be made to convince States not-party to the Convention, especially those on the African Continent, to sign up to, ratify, and implement, without delay or exception.
- The need to completely destroy the remaining stockpiles declared by States Parties as soon as possible, as well as the means to produce these abhorrent weapons.
- National capacity building and promotion of the peaceful use of chemistry, inter alia.

In conclusion Mr. Chairperson, The Gambia would like to commend Her Excellency Ambassador RONO of the Republic of Kenya, for her stewardship of the Open-Ended Working Group on

Terrorism, as well as the excellent progress being made by the Open-Ended Working Group for the Third Review Conference, under the distinguished leadership of Her Excellency Ambassador Nassima BAGHLI of the Republic of Algeria. The upcoming Review Conference provides a unique opportunity to reaffirm the continued relevance of the Chemical Weapons Convention, but also to clearly demarcate the future path for its implementation.

With that, Mr. Chairperson, I kindly request that this Statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventeenth Conference of States Parties. I thank you for your kind attention.